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THE PRESENT STATE OF LIBERTY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND HER COLONIES.

Heu miseri cives, non Hostem, inimicaque castra,
——— Vestras Spes Uritis.

VIRGIL.

BY AN ENGLISHMAN.

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RPJCB

THE PREFACE.

IT is of great importance, that all perſons, who are the ſubjects of government, ſhould have a juſt idea of their natural and civil rights, and that they ſhould be apprized when they are invaded. As few of the pieces that I have ſeen on the ſubject of government in general, or concerning the attempts which have lately been made on the liberty of this country, are ſufficiently plain and intelligible, I have endeavoured to ſupply the defect, by treating of theſe ſubjects in the way of *queſtion and anſwer*, which gives me an opportunity of touching the true ſtate of the litigated points in a clearer manner than any other method.

I have not, knowingly, miſrepreſented any facts, the reflections I have made upon them are ſuch as I could not avoid, and the liberty I have taken, with the meaſures of government, is no greater than the conſtitution of this kingdom both admits, and requires. Any thing farther than this, is no concern of mine. I ſhall contentedly, and chearfully,

leave the iſſue to the merits of the cauſe, and to that good providence which diſpoſes of all things.

Sincerely do I deplore the infatuation of thoſe who were the authors of the meaſures that I have animadverted upon, but more that of thoſe who perſiſt in carrying them on, notwithſtanding their conſequences are, every day, more and more alarming. In this I have a view, chiefly, to our late meaſures reſpecting North America, a caſe in which every man, woman, and child among us, and our poſterity, to the lateſt generation, are deeply intereſted.

Pity it is, that the iron hand of oppreſſion ſhould be extended to thoſe people, whom nothing but a love of freedom induced to leave their native clime, in the arbitrary reigns of our former princes! How prepoſterous is it, that thoſe, who glory in a free conſtitution for themſelves, ſhould wiſh for a power over *their fellow ſubjects*, which would make them the moſt abject ſlaves, of which there is any account in hiſtory; that a *commercial nation* ſhould take meaſures to cut off the greateſt ſource of their own *wealth*; and that a nation which, on many accounts, ſtands in need of *peace*, ſhould, in aſſerting her unjuſt claims, provoke a *conteſt*, which, (if the Americans be the genuine offspring of Britons) cannot but be attended with the moſt pernicious conſequences to both. Earneſtly therefore

therefore muſt every friend to Great Britain and the Colonies (whoſe intereſt is the ſame) pray, that this dreadful and unnatural ſtruggle may be prevented, by the ſucceſs of their conſtitutional, loyal, and peaceable efforts for freedom; for ſecuring their natural rights as men, and the civil rights which they have hitherto enjoyed as Engliſhmen.

GLADLY would I indulge a more chearful proſpect, both with reſpect to America and Great Britain. The *tree of liberty*, I truſt, has taken too deep root in both countries, not to be able to ſtand the ſhock of a few ſtorms, before it be quite overturned. I hope it can be nothing more than a temporary deluſion that we are permitted to labour under, and that the united voice of a loyal people, humbly petitioning for the ſecurity of their invaluable rights, will at length be heard. The *folly*, if not the *iniquity*, of all attempts to enſlave a great and magnanimous nation, or any part of it, is ſurely, too glaring, not to be ſeen, before they can be put in execution.

IF, notwithſtanding this, the time ſhould be approaching (tho' I hope it is ſtill at a great diſtance) when, as Monteſquieu has propheſied, this country ſhall loſe its liberty, yet, while the precious moments of freedom remain, let us, at leaſt, indulge ourſelves in the gloomy ſatisfaction of reviewing the infamy, which has always ſooner or later overwhelmed

whelmed the authors, or promoters, of their country's ruin, whether they were kings and their tools the miniſters, or (as I have ſhewn to be, in all caſes, more juſtly ſuſpected) they were miniſters and their tools the kings.

In circumſtances ſo diſcouraging, all the conſolation we can have, muſt be derived from the conſideration of the *unſearchable ways of divine providence*, and the gracious deſigns of that great being, who can bring good out of the greateſt ſeeming evil. And moſt earneſtly do I pray, that he *who has the hearts of princes in his hands, and who turns them as rivers of water which way ſoever he pleaſes*, may give thoſe who have done wrong underſtanding to ſee, and virtue to acknowledge their errors and injuſtice; that the ſpirit of diſcord, which ſeems to be gone forth among us, may be reſtrained; and that the preſent diſtractions of this country may iſſue in the real good of all its inhabitants.

For my own part, I cannot help ſaying, that, if ſuch meaſures, as have for ſome time been adopted, continue to influence the Britiſh miniſtry, I ſhall make little account of my privileges as an *Engliſhman*; and, I truſt, ſhall think more of thoſe which are infinitely more valuable, and leſs precarious, thoſe which I hope for as a *chriſtian*, and a citizen of heaven.

THE

THE PRESENT STATE OF LIBERTY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND HER COLONIES.

SECTION I.

Of Government in general.

Qu. WHAT is a *Society?*

An. A *society* conſiſts of a number of perſons united by their common intereſt, and by the uſe of the ſame meaſures to promote that intereſt.

Qu. What are the advantages of ſociety?

An. Without the aid of ſociety, a ſingle perſon would not, in many caſes, be able to procure a redreſs of his grievances, or many of the conveni-

encies of life, both of which may be accompliſhed by the wiſdom and ſtrength of a whole community. Biaſſed by a regard to their ſeparate intereſts, men, unconnected with ſociety, would think differently concerning their own rights, and thoſe of their neighbours, and there being no perſons to whom an appeal could be made, the diſpute would either terminate in violence and blood, or the weaker muſt yield to the impoſition and oppreſſion of the ſtronger.

Qu. Who are the *ſupreme magiſtrates* of a ſtate?

An. *Supreme magiſtrates* are thoſe perſons who act in the name of, and for the public, in thoſe caſes in which it would be impoſſible, or inconvenient, for all the members of the ſociety to aſſemble, and act for themſelves.

Qu. How far does the power of the ſupreme magiſtrates extend?

An. As the ſupreme magiſtrates repreſent the whole ſociety, their power is the ſame with that of the ſociety itſelf; and the good of the ſociety being the great object and end of their union, the magiſtrates have the ſame power of doing every thing which they think conducive to that end, that the people themſelves would have, if they could be aſſembled for that purpoſe.

Qu. Are the ſupreme magiſtrates, then, ſubject to no controul whatever?

An. The ſupreme magiſtrates being appointed by the people, in order to do their buſineſs, they are neceſſarily to be conſidered as *the ſervants of the people*, who have, therefore, a right to call them to account, if they do not anſwer the great ends for which they were appointed.

Qu. What things ſhould the public laws, or the regulations of the ſupreme magiſtrates reſpect?

An.

An. As the end of ſociety, and conſequently of the inſtitution of magiſtracy, is *the good of the whole body*; laws, or public regulations, ſhould reſpect thoſe things only in which the wiſdom and ſtrength of the ſociety can be exerted to the advantage of the members of it.

Qu. Is it not better, in all caſes, to have recourſe to the wiſdom and ſtrength of the whole, than to depend upon the prudence and force of individuals?

An. No, there are many caſes in which this interference of magiſtracy would produce the greateſt confuſion, embarraſment and diſtreſs; as, for inſtance, if the magiſtrates ſhould forbid parents to puniſh their children, or their ſervants, and take the whole buſineſs of correction upon themſelves; if they ſhould preſcribe what medicines ſhould be taken in particular diſorders, or appoint the phyſicians, to whoſe preſcriptions we ſhould, in all caſes, be obliged to conform; or if they ſhould dictate to us the object or mode of our religious worſhip, which reſpects our happineſs not in this, but in a future ſtate.

Qu. Does not every perſon, when he becomes a member of ſociety, virtually ſurrender the power which he before enjoyed, of providing for his own ſecurity and happineſs?

An. He does ſo; but only with reſpect to thoſe things in which the public can make better proviſion for them than he could for himſelf; becauſe the good of the whole requires this, and nothing more. Any power, therefore, which magiſtrates aſſume, farther than this, is tyranny, and an arbitrary invaſion of men's natural rights.

Qu. What is the beſt ſecurity of theſe natural rights?

An. The great natural rights and liberties of mankind are beſt ſecured, when the ſupreme magiſtracy is in the hands of perſons choſen by the people, and when they are entruſted with that power for a limited time. For if once the ſupreme magiſtracy fall into the hands of perſons who are independent of the people, they may fancy that they have an intereſt ſeparate from that of the people, in which caſe they will naturally uſurp the rights of the people, and aggrandize themſelves at their expence.

Qu. Is it neceſſary that all the people ſhould have voices in the election of their ſupreme magiſtrates?

An. No, it will generally be ſufficient, if the choice of magiſtrates be in the majority of thoſe, whoſe circumſtances render them above being corrupted, ſo as to give their votes in an improper manner. For when perſons of this claſs provide for their own intereſt, they will neceſſarily provide for that of the ſociety at large.

Qu. What is the firſt ſtep that the people ſhould take when they are oppreſſed by their governors, being either deprived of their natural rights, or of the only ſure guard of them, the choice of their magiſtrates?

An. They muſt make ſtrong remonſtrances to thoſe governors who have betrayed their truſt, expreſſing their ſenſe of the injuſtice that has been done them, and their abhorrence of the maxims of government by which they have been oppreſſed.

Qu. May a people go no farther than this, in order to obtain a redreſs of national grievances?

An. In general, this will be ſufficient; for no perſon, who is not entirely diveſted of the common feelings of mankind, will bear to live abhorred by his fellow citizens, and to die with in-

famy intailed upon his name and poſterity. But if, through the infatuation of governors, intoxicated with power, theſe means ſhould be inſufficient to obtain the end, nothing hinders that a people, thus groſsly abuſed, and inſulted by their magiſtrates (who, by whatever name they are diſtinguiſhed, are, in fact, nothing more than their *ſervants)* ſhould ſtrip them of their power, and confer it where they have reaſon to hope it will be leſs abuſed. It was this principle which juſtified, and effected the glorious *revolution*, and gave our forefathers a happy relief from the tyranny and oppreſſions of James II.

Qu. In what countries is it moſt difficult to oppoſe the attempts of tyrannical magiſtrates?

An In countries of great extent, in which the people live at a great diſtance from one another, ſo that they can never aſſemble, or by any other means act in concert, and combine againſt their tyrants; and where alſo the magiſtrates muſt neceſſarily be intruſted with great power, and have a great number of officers under them, who will generally be attached to their intereſt, and ſupport their meaſures, be they ever ſo villainous and oppreſſive. So great are the advantages of which the ſovereign is poſſeſſed in theſe circumſtances, that there are few countries in the world, of conſiderable extent, which are not at this day in a ſtate of actual ſlavery, the people having neither any power of arriving at the ſupreme magiſtracy themſelves, or votes in the nomination of thoſe magiſtrates. If the natural rights of thoſe people are, in any meaſure, preſerved, it is becauſe the prince does not think it worth his while to moleſt them, or becauſe the ſpirit and cuſtoms of the times have given them a ſanction, which he hath not the courage to violate. Abject ſlaves as the Turks

are, they have many privileges, which the grand Seignior dares not invade.

Qu. Whether are *kings*, or *miniſters* more juſtly ſuſpected of deſigns upon the liberties of a people?

An. In general the miniſters: for in all arbitrary governments, it is the miniſter who is, in fact, poſſeſſed of the chief power of the ſtate, while the prince has nothing but the name, and the pageantry of it. Thoſe princes, therefore, who liſten to their pernicious advice, are, in reality, ſubmitting their own necks, and thoſe of their poſterity, to the yoke of their ſervants. For ſuch is the condition of human affairs, that, in all ſucceſſions of ſovereign princes, *nine* have been weak, and governed by others, for *one* who has been able to govern himſelf. Indeed in arbitrary monarchies, the chance of having able princes is, on many accounts, much leſs than in other ſtates.

SECTION II.

Of the State of Liberty in England.

Qu. WHAT are the outlines of the conſtitution of Great Britain?

An. Great Britain is a country in which the ſupreme magiſtracy is lodged in the three eſtates of the realm, one of which is the *King*, and is hereditary, another the houſe of *Lords*, who are ſuch, either by inheritance, or the king's pleaſure, and the third is the Houſe of *Commons*, who (though imperfectly and unequally) repreſent the people.

Qu. What is meant by the *king's prerogative?*

An. The king's prerogative is by no means a diſcretionary power of doing what he thinks to be right,

right, in things that are not expreſsly provided for by law. The prerogative is a branch of the common law of the land, enabling the king to do thoſe acts only, which it has been cuſtomary for the king to perform, and, like any other article of common law, is to be aſcertained by precedent. It would be no free government, if any thing was excepted from the juriſdiction of law, and ſubmitted to the determination of arbitrary pleaſure.

Qu. How is it ſaid that *the king can do no wrong?*

An. The meaning of it is, that the king is not perſonally reſponſible for any meaſures of government, but the miniſters who adviſed them. It is eſſential to the freedom of government, that all public meaſures ſhould be imputed to perſons who may be freely cenſured, and arraigned at the bar of the public. For if it were once admitted, that the king himſelf engaged in any public meaſures, of his own motion (ſince it is an allowed maxim that he can do no wrong) there could be no redreſs of grievances. It is abſolutely, and obviouſly neceſſary, that a perſon who muſt not be ſuppoſed to do wrong, ſhould never be ſuppoſed to do any thing.

Qu. Where lies the ſecurity which the bulk of the people enjoy for the continuance of their natural and civil rights?

An. In the houſe of commons, who are choſen by themſelves. For the lords; whoſe number is filled up at the pleaſure of the king, who muſt live in ſplendour, and whoſe younger ſons, and numerous dependents, muſt be provided for by the court, may be expected to be, in general, in the intereſt of the court.

Qu.

Qu. What is it that the people of England have moſt to fear, as being moſt liable to ſubject them to arbitrary power?

An. The corruption of their repreſentatives; for when once it ſhall be in the power of the court to ſecure, by places or penſions, a majority in the houſe of commons, that houſe will no longer repreſent the ſentiments of the people, but the pleaſure of the king only. And then this important branch of the legiſlature will not only become inſignificant, with reſpect to its original intention, but will be the moſt dangerous engine of oppreſſion; Britons, like the Romans under the emperors, will be enſlaved, with all the external badges of freedom.

Qu. What are the circumſtances reſpecting the houſe of commons, which give thinking men the moſt reaſon to apprehend, that we are approaching to this dreadful ſituation?

An. The great number of placemen and penſioners, and of thoſe who are in expectation of emoluments of that kind, in that houſe. Theſe never fail to ſecond the meaſures of the adminiſtration whatever they are. To this is added the long continuance of their power, viz. for *ſeven years*, which was originally an arbitrary uſurpation of the rights of the people, and which makes it worth their while to lay out great ſums of money to ſecure a ſeat, which, in ſuch a number of years, is ſure to afford them an opportunity of reimburſing themſelves with advantage.

Qu. How comes it to paſs, that it is in the power of the court to get ſo many of their partiſans into the houſe, when the members of it repreſent the people, and are elected by them?

An. It ariſes from ſo great a majority of the members being choſen by the inhabitants, or free-

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men of inconſiderable towns, the ſole property of which is in the hands of ſome of the lords, or other adherents to the court, who can oblige them to return whoever they ſhall direct.

Qu. As you ſeemed to repreſent our *political rights*, as of uſe only to guard our *natural and civil rights*, and that, in ſome caſes, theſe are ſufficiently guarded by the ſpirit of the times, and other circumſtances that controll a tendency to deſpotiſm, notwithſtanding the people have no ſhare in the legiſlature; are we ſo happy as to have no reaſon to apprehend any thing from the loſs of our political liberty? Do the perſons who are in adminiſtration ſeem diſpoſed to make any attempts upon our privileges as men and Engliſhmen?

An. The miniſtry of Great Britain have, of late years, made many alarming attacks upon the eſſential rights and privileges of the ſubject; and there is not, as yet, any proſpect of their being called to account for their illegal and arbitrary proceedings.

Qu. What are the great privileges of Engliſhmen, which have been infringed by them?

An. 1. They have evaded the operation of the great writ of *Habeas Corpus*, whereby a perſon accuſed of any crime cannot be detained in cuſtody, but muſt be brought immediately to a court of law, and be admitted to bail (if the offence be of ſuch a nature as to be bailable) till he can be tried according to law.

2. They have, by a *general warrant*, in which no perſon was ſaid to have been accuſed upon oath, or ſo much as named, arreſted the perſon of an Engliſhman, and a member of the houſe of commons, removing him from the cuſtody of one perſon to that of another, and confined him without admitting his neareſt friends to ſpeak to him.

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By the ſame warrant they ſeized all his private *papers*, and out of them, thus illegally procured, collected evidence for a crime, which ſuppoſes that he himſelf publiſhed thoſe papers.

3. They reſtrict the liberty of the preſs, that great ſecurity for every other branch of our liberty, and the ſcourge of their arbitrary proceedings, by conſtruing all cenſures upon them, and their meaſures, into *libels*, and procuring the authors of them to be ſeverely puniſhed.

4. They have, in theſe caſes of libels, contrived to evade the great privilege of Engliſhmen, that of being tried by his peers, in the method of *jury*, not daring to truſt the iſſue of ſuch baſe proſecutions to the impartial judgment of their countrymen; and, in the place of it, they have extended the methods of trial by *attachment*, *information*, and *interrogatories*, in which juries are not uſed, and which are conducted in a manner as unfavourable to liberty, as the inquiſition in the church of Rome, and the odious ſtar-chamber under the Steuarts.

5. The great *bill of rights* has been invaded by a repeated refuſal, to admit the firſt county in England, to judge of the fitneſs of the perſon who ſhall repreſent them in parliament; and one whom they had freely choſen has been excluded, tho' guilty of no crime that was not publickly known at the time of election, and none for which the law had not had its full ſatisfaction.

6. Recourſe has unneceſſarily been had to that great engine of arbitrary power, *a military force*, in a manner contrary to the genius and ſpirit of our conſtitution; and where a band of *ruffians* were hired to diſturb the freedom of an election of a county member, in favour of the miniſters, and great violences and murder were committed, two

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of the *murderers* (convicted and condemned in a court of juſtice) had his Majeſty's *free pardon.*

Qu. What can the people do in ſuch a ſituation of their affairs, when their moſt valuable rights ſeem to be in danger?

An. In theſe circumſtances every man, who wiſhes well to his country, ſhould contribute liberally to the ſupport of all that ſuffer in the common cauſe of liberty, and ſpread the alarm thro' the whole kingdom, in order to make all the people thoroughly ſenſible of the impending danger. They muſt promote the ſending of inſtructions to members of parliament, from all the free and independent electors, expreſſing their ſentiments of the ſtate of public affairs, and endeavour to get petitions for the redreſs of grievances, ſigned by all ranks and orders of men, who are unbiaſſed by court preferment, and have no expectations from that quarter, for themſelves, or their friends. And there can be no doubt, but that the voice of the nation, rendered thus clear and audible, will be heard. No miniſter could bear to live in a country, in which he ſhould ſee himſelf abhorred by all men of ſenſe and virtue. The truth would, at length, reach the ear of our moſt gracious ſovereign. He would liſten to the reaſonable requeſts of his loyal ſubjects. Both would again be happy in their mutual affection. Our affairs would be eſtabliſhed by concord at home, and then no power on earth would dare to provoke our reſentment.

Qu. What ſhould be the immediate object of the friends of this country at this time, and what ſhould be the principal articles in their inſtructions to their repreſentatives in parliament?

An. As the foundation of all the preceding diſorders, all placemen, court penſioners, and ſons

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of the nobility, ſhould be excluded the houſe of commons. The duration of the preſent, and of all future parliaments, ſhould be ſhortened; if poſſible, the ſmall boroughs ſhould be aboliſhed; and all the members ſhould be elected in ſome ſuch manner as by counties. Alſo the candidates ſhould take the oath againſt bribery and corruption, and the election ſhould be by ballot. Were theſe eſſential points once gained, all the reſt would follow of courſe. Impeachments would be preferred againſt all thoſe who ſhould adviſe tyrannical and oppreſſive meaſures, and ſubſequent miniſters would be deterred, by their puniſhment, from following their example. But if, in our preſent circumſtances, the full eſtabliſhment of our rights, for the future, could be procured, it would be well worth while to purchaſe it by an *act of indemnity*, and the oblivion of every thing that has hitherto been done in violation of them.

SECTION III.

Of the Affairs of AMERICA.

Qu. HAVE the members of the preſent adminiſtration extended their arbitrary meaſures beyond the bounds of Great Britain?

An. Yes, they are purſuing meaſures ſtill more arbitrary and oppreſſive with the inhabitants of *North-America*.

Qu. What is the great grievance that thoſe people complain of?

An. It is their being *taxed* by the parliament of Great Britain, the members of which are ſo far from taxing themſelves, that they eaſe themſelves at

at the ſame time. If this meaſure takes place, the coloniſts will be reduced to a ſtate of as complete ſervitude, as any people of which there is an account in hiſtory. For by the ſame power, by which the people of England can compel them to pay *one penny*, they may compel them to pay the *laſt penny* they have. There will be nothing but arbitrary impoſition on the one ſide, and humble petition on the other.

Qu. Have not the people of North America been greatly benefited by the Engliſh? Was not the late expenſive war undertaken on their account, and is it not reaſonable that they ſhould, at leaſt, bear their ſhare of the burden of it?

An. This is an argument very proper to be urged with the coloniſts, in caſe they ſhould refuſe to aſſiſt their mother country, but it is well known that, beſides bearing very heavy taxes, impoſed by their own houſes of aſſembly, for the ſupport of their own government, they have always been ready, of their own accord, to ſerve the common cauſe to the utmoſt of their ability, and, as ſome have thought, even beyond it. But admitting they had not done this, is not abſolute ſlavery too great a puniſhment for their ingratitude?

Qu. Are there not many conſiderable towns in England, as *Leeds and Mancheſter*, which ſend no repreſentatives to parliament, and yet, notwithſtanding this, are taxed by them? What have the Americans to complain of more?

An. The repreſentation of this country in parliament is acknowledged to be very unequal and imperfect; but the effect of this imperfection and inequality of repreſentation, is of little conſequence, ſo long as the perſons who impoſe the tax upon others, impoſe it upon themſelves at the ſame time; for if they feel nothing for others,

they

they will feel for themſelves. A parallel to the preſent caſe of the Americans, would be a tax upon thoſe towns who ſend no repreſentatives, or an exemption of thoſe towns that do ſend members. In this caſe, would not *Leeds* and *Mancheſter* make as loud complaints as the people of North America do now? Would any motive, but that ariſing from the want of power, prevent their reſiſting the levying of ſuch a tax, notwithſtanding it ſhould be paſſed into a bill, in the moſt regular and authentic manner, by all the three eſtates of the realm?

Q. Hath it not been the cuſtom, in former times at leaſt, for the Engliſh parliament to impoſe taxes on thoſe provinces which ſent no members to it.

An. By no means. Ireland, though a conquered country, always taxed itſelf, and doth ſo to this day. The king of England never does more than lay his wants before the Iriſh parliament, and he receives what they themſelves think proper to give him. The Scots, alſo, taxed themſelves before the union. Wales, a conquered country, did the ſame, and even the inhabitants of the counties palatine, before they, at their own requeſt, ſent members to repreſent them in the Engliſh Houſe of Commons.

Qu. Does not the Britiſh parliament make laws that *reſtrict* the *commerce* of the Colonies, and may not this burden be equivalent to a tax?

An. The Britiſh parliament alſo makes laws that reſtrict the commerce of Ireland, but notwithſtanding the near neighbourhood of this country (whereby we are pretty good judges of its circumſtances) we never preſumed to lay a direct tax upon it, nor indeed upon North America, till of late. Allowing that, eventually, there is no difference between theſe things, the one is a much

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more open and undiſguiſed oppreſſion than the other; and there is a degree to which any people will bear hardſhip without complaint; but oppreſſion, beyond a certain degree, will make even a wiſe man mad. Such powers as, from their nature, muſt neceſſarily be lodged in one of the parts of the whole empire, the Coloniſts will never object to in Great Britain. The moſt abſolute juriſdiction of this kind they would never complain of; and, provided the effects of it were not greatly oppreſſive, they would never think of nicely ſetting bounds to it. It may, perhaps, be impoſſible to fix preciſe boundaries to the authority of Great Britain over the Colonies, becauſe it is not eaſy to determine what degree of power in the Mother Country would be the moſt beneficial to both; but the extremes, in a thouſand caſes of great importance (as in all queſtions concerning morals, virtue and vice) may be obvious, when the exact medium cannot be aſcertained; and, in this caſe, moderation on both ſides would make that very eaſy in practice, which is ever ſo difficult in theory.

Qu. What can the North Americans plead for an exemption from taxes impoſed by the Britiſh parliament, but ſuch *charters* as our kings have uſually given to corporations, which are all of them liable to be regulated, or ſet aſide by all the three eſtates of the realm?

An. Admitting that the privileges of the Coloniſts had no other origin, yet the continuance of this eſtabliſhment ſuch a number of years, and the fatal conſequence of revoking it (which is nothing leſs than the abſolute ſlavery of a whole people) ought to make their rights to be conſidered in a very different light from that of the charters of common corporations, the members of which are generally benefited by their abrogation. A

corporate

corporate town, generally bears a very ſmall proportion to the whole ſtate; whereas all our North American Colonies bear a very great proportion to the whole, and, in all probability, will, at no great diſtance of time, be equal to all the reſt put together. And it ought not to be forgotten, that it is the good of *the whole empire*, conſidered as one, which ſhould be the object of government, and not the aggrandizement of any particular part. If other maxims prevail, one part of the empire will be the ſeat of deſpotiſm, and all the other ſubjects will be ſlaves,

Qu. In all diſputes between Great Britain and her Colonies, muſt not Great Britain, tho' ſhe be only one part of the whole united empire, be, of neceſſity, the *judge*; and ſhould not the Colonies, therefore, ſubmit to her deciſion? Who can be umpire between them?

An. It is true, things are ſo circumſtanced, that in all diſputes, Great Britain muſt, of courſe, be the judge; becauſe ſhe has the *power* of enforcing the ſentence; but ſhe cannot act in that capacity, contrary to the clear ſenſe of the Colonies, without aſſerting an undiſguiſed tyranny and arbitrary power. Tho' Great Britain be the ſtronger of the two, ſhe ſhould let *reaſon* be judge between them, and not take advantage of mere ſtrength, to oppreſs thoſe who are not able to reſiſt her unjuſt decrees. If (to recur to the caſe I put before) the parliament of Great Britain ſhould lay a tax upon Leeds, Mancheſter, or any other town, that ſends no repreſentatives to parliament; or if the three eſtates ſhould concur to deprive any particular ſubject of his natural and civil rights (for inſtance, his right of being elected to ſerve his country in parliament) or if they ſhould deprive a borough or county of its right to ſend repreſentatives in theſe caſes, Great Britain would, likewiſe, aſſume the

office

office of judge. There could be no appeal from the ſentence, and the particular perſon, the town, or the county would ſubmit; but they would give way as they would to a tempeſt, a torrent, or a hurricane, which they were not able to reſiſt, and they would relieve themſelves the firſt opportunity.

Qu. But is not the *advantage* accruing to Great Britain from this taxation of America, a plauſible pretence for having recourſe to ſo oppreſſive a meaſure?

An. By no means. The acquiſition by taxes is, and always will be, inconſiderable, and is infinitely overbalanced by the *loſs of trade*, ariſing from the diſaffection of the Colonies to their Mother Country, and their conſequent averſion to take our commodities.

Qu. What is ſuppoſed to be the amount of our trade to our Colonies?

An. I think I have heard it computed at about *one-forth of our whole commerce*; and provided the inhabitants of North America multiply as they have done hitherto (and there is a proſpect of their increaſing even faſter, as they have now more room to extend themſelves, without fear of the French) in leſs than a century, it will not be in the power of Great Britain to ſupply their demand for manufactures, were all her inhabitants employed in them.

Qu. But will not the Coloniſts chuſe to manufacture for themſelves?

An. It is far from being their intereſt to commence manufacturers, and nothing but neceſſity can drive them to it. Land is ſo cheap, that every man is ambitious of acquiring property in it. Few hands, therefore, being at liberty to apply to labour or manufactures, their work is ſo dear, that it will always be for their intereſt to purchaſe of us, rather than ſupply themſelves, till the whole country be fully peopled, which is a period too remote for attention.

Qu.

Qu. What ſeem to be the beſt, the moſt equitable, and advantageous maxims to be obſerved by Great Britain, with reſpect to our Colonies?

An. The moſt equitable maxims, as well as the beſt policy, in our conduct to the Americans, is to lay aſide all jealouſy of them, not even to indulge the idea of *ſuperiority*, and to conſult the good of the whole, as of *one united empire*, each part of which has the ſame natural right to liberty and happineſs with the other; to encourage agriculture among them, and manufactures among ourſelves, and by no means interfere in their interior government, ſo far as to lay any tax upon them, either for the purpoſe of raiſing a revenue, or for any other purpoſe whatever. The benefits ariſing *ſpontaneouſly* from our extenſive and increaſing commerce with them, will infinitely overbalance all that we ſhall ever be able to extort from them by way of *tax*. Thus ſhall we be mutually the ſource of ſtrength and opulence to each other, and nothing, in the ordinary courſe of Divine Providence, but a wrong-headed and tyrannical adminiſtration, can hinder our being the moſt flouriſhing, and the happieſt ſtate upon the face of the earth.

Qu. But have we not gone too far to *recede*, without coming to extremities?

An. It is never too late for any man, or body of men, to repent of, and rectify, what they are convinced they have done amiſs. Let us, at leaſt, virtually acknowledge it, by generouſly cancelling all that is paſt, and ſuffering things to remain for the future as they were ſome years ago. (Happy years of mutual love and confidence!) This will not fail to ſecure the gratitude and affection of the Coloniſts. Nay more, having ſeen our errors, and repented of them, there will be a better foundation laid for mutual confidence than ever.

Amantium iræ amoris redintegratio eſt.

FINIS.